

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

To produce images at high speed, to conserve energy, and to be satisfactorily operated over the long run, a method fixes a toner onto an electrophotographic image-receiving sheet with the use of a belt fixing and smoothing apparatus and thereby forms an electrophotographic image. The belt fixing and smoothing apparatus includes a hot-pressing member, a belt member, a cooling device, and a cooling-releasing section. In the method, the total heat capacity per unit area in portions where the belt member, the toner, and the electrophotographic image-receiving sheet are in contact with one another is 840 J/K/m² or less.